Indians in foreign jails

960. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than 4,550 Indians are languishing in foreign jails in 84 cities globally;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to get them released from foreign jails;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the countries where the Indians are languishing in jails are denied access even to our embassies abroad; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) yes.

(b) Government has been taking several steps to get the Indian prisoners released from Jails in foreign countries. These include periodic demarches at the Government-to- Government level, as also requests made for the purpose of through diplomatic channels from time to time. Indian Missions/ Posts abroad also extend assistance by seeking consular access to the detainees and prisoners requesting their speedy trial, providing advice/ guidance in legal and other matters, interacting with their relatives in India, ensuring proper treatment in the prisons and facilitating repatriation to India on their release.

(c) No.

(d) Does not arise.

Conveying of PM's view on Terrorists to Pakistan President

961. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prime Minister has conveyed a message to Pakistan President that "any terrorists can not be freedom fighters" ;

(b) if so, the reaction/response of the Pakistani President/Government in this regard; and

(c) the security steps set up by Indian Government from terrorist attacks during the current winter session when rehabilitation of earthquake sufferers are rapidly undertaken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNALAFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHMMED): (a) The Prime Minister has repeatedly conveyed to Pakistan President the importance of Pakistan fulfilling its commitment outlined in the Joint Press Statement of 6 January 2004 of not permitting the use of territory under its control to support terrorism in any manner. The Prime Minister has also stated that no country can any longer pretend that some one's terrorists could be some one else's freedom fighters.

(b) Pakistan denies that there are any terrorist training camps in Pakistan. It has so far not taken any significant action to dismantle the infrastructure of support to terrorism, such as communications, launching pads, training camps, funding, etc.

(c) Government is aware that terrorist attacks may continue even as rehabilitation of the victims of the earthquake is underway. The security forces remain geared up, vigilant and steadfast in their counter terrorism operations.

Outcome of the meeting of the Board of Trustees

962. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have convened a meeting of the Central Board of Trustees recently to take a decision on the Employees Provident Fund interest rate;

(b) if so, the decision taken in this meeting; and

(c) the demand of the Union Representatives(s) in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO): (a) to (c) The Central Board of Trustees, Employees' Provident Fund in its meeting held on 21.11.2005 had deliberated on the issue of rate of interest for the year 2005-06. However, as the discussions were inconclusive, it was unanimously decided to deliberate further in the next meeting of the Central Board of Trustees (EPF) to finalise the matter.